



Department
for Education

Welcome to the South East RISE Inclusive Mainstream Conference

Dame Kate Dethridge

9.30 - 9.50

March 2026

To submit
questions for the
panel discussion:



Housekeeping

- We are not expecting a fire alarm test today. If the alarm sounds, we will need to evacuate.
- We have people in attendance today with nut allergies – please refrain from eating nuts inside the venue.
- If you would like to access a Prayer Room, please use Executive Box 44 on the 3rd Floor.
- Toilets are outside this room and down the hallway.
- Teas and coffees will be available during breaks throughout the day.
- DfE conference organisers are in attendance and mostly wearing green. Do flag them down if you need any support or directions.

To submit
questions for the
panel discussion:



Introduction to the day

- Why mainstream inclusion?
- The agenda and aim of the day.
- The broader context – Schools White Paper and SEND consultation.
- Expectations for this conference:
 - **Engage with the sessions.**
 - **Speak to colleagues.**
 - **Ask questions.**

To submit
questions for the
panel discussion:





Department
for Education

Inclusive Mainstream Vision

Dr Julian Grenier CBE

*Senior Content and Engagement Manager for Early Years and representing the
Expert Advisory Group*

9.50 - 10.20

March 2026

Inclusion EAG

“For too long, SEND has been treated as separate from mainstream education: a parallel system with its own language and frameworks.”

“An inclusive system starts from a different premise. It assumes every child may face barriers to learning at different points and asks how we remove barriers to attendance, participation and achievement rather than how we categorise need.”

Tom Rees – Chair of Inclusion Expert Advisory Group

RISE national priorities

1. attainment, with a focus on English and maths
2. inclusive mainstream
3. reception-year quality
4. attendance

We are breaking the link between **background and success** through the **Opportunity Mission** and raising living standards through the **Growth Mission**

We will give all children the Best Start in Life

75% of children aged 5 reaching a Good level of Development by 2028.

Every child will achieve and thrive in a good local school

Focusing on increasing attainment and attendance.

We will provide skills for opportunity and growth

Two-thirds of young people are participating in higher-level study. This includes targeting at least 10% of young people to go into Level 4 or 5 study by 2040.



Family Security: keeping children safe and tackling child poverty

Reduction in the number of children in care and in the number of children in relative poverty



Case for change

Destinations

Lack of expertise

**Parental
experience**

Delays

Segregation



Early

Children should receive the support they need as soon as possible.

Intervening upstream, earlier in children's lives when this can have most impact, will start to break the cycle of needs going unmet and getting worse.

Local

Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a school close to their home, alongside their peers, rather than travelling long distances from their family and community.

Special schools should continue to play a vital role supporting those with the most complex needs.

SEND Reform Principles

Shared

Education, health and care services should work in partnership with local government, families, teachers, experts and representative bodies to deliver better experiences and outcomes for all our children.

Fair

Every school should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs, including as they change over time, without parents having to fight to get support for their children.

Where specialist provision is needed for children in mainstream, special or alternative provision, we will ensure it is there, with clear legal requirements and safeguards for children and parents.

Effective

Reforms should be grounded in evidence, ensuring all education settings know where to go to find effective practice that has excellent long-term outcomes for children.



Three layers of support to deliver better outcomes for all children

Children & young people

All children

Children who require some additional support from their setting, e.g. personalised materials, outlined in an Individual Support Plan

Children who require additional support from their setting, with input from education and health care professionals, e.g. a speech and language therapist.

Children with the most complex needs, which cannot be met in the mainstream classroom

The new offer

Universal

Layers of support

Targeted

Targeted Plus

Specialist

Child's experience

- Newly trained, upskilled teachers
- First of kind National Inclusion Standards

High quality support, on demand, in mainstream:

- Individual Support Plans
- Support for transitions

Improved access to external expertise:

- Inclusion Bases
- Experts at Hand
- Outreach

- Specialist provision packages
- EHCPs (in mainstream & specialist schools)
- Specialist bases
- Special school places



Universal



Targeted



Specialist



Universal



Targeted



Specialist



Universal



Targeted



Specialist

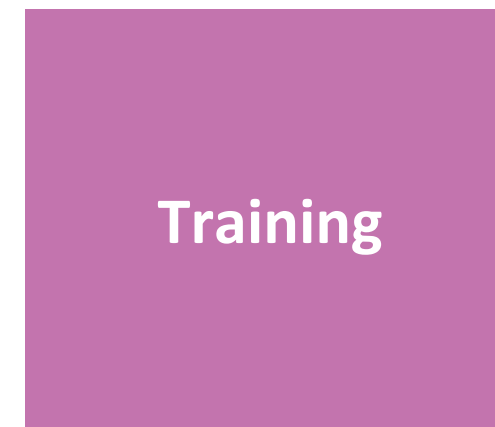
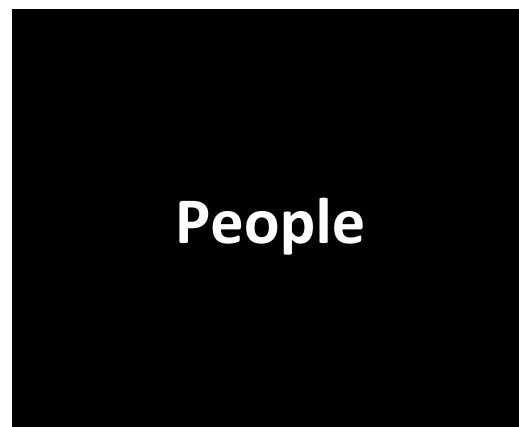
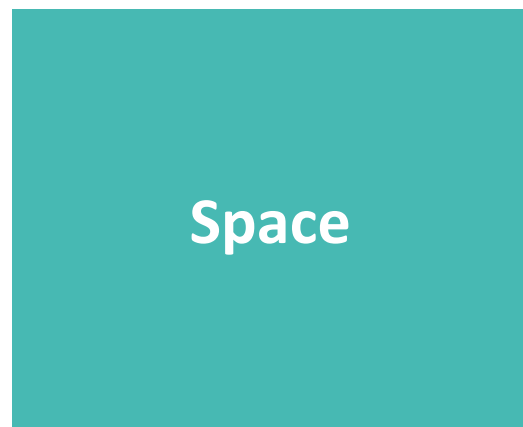
What does this mean for teachers?

- All staff will benefit from national SEND training. You will be supported to create inclusive learning environments to meet the needs of your students
- All schools will have access to the new Experts at Hand service, allowing you to bring in specialist support as soon as you identify need, without the need for statutory processes
- A digital system to record needs and support in an Individual Support Plan (ISP), improving communication and supporting effective transition



Funding

To enable...





We are investing heavily in the system so that children receive timely and appropriate support

We will invest an additional £4bn in reforms between 2026-27 to 2028-29 and £3.7bn in Capital (2025-26 to 2029-30)

Inclusive Mainstream Fund - £1.6bn

For to schools, colleges and early years settings, to spend on targeted support for children with additional needs, such as small group support for literacy or numeracy.

National training for all EY, School and Post-16 staff – over £200m

To ensure that all staff get new training to support children with SEND.

Experts at Hand - £1.8bn

For LA and health services to give EY settings, mainstream schools and colleges direct access to expert support - 40 days per average primary school and 160 days per average secondary school.

Education Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists - over £40m

To fund training for over 200 more educational psychologists per year from 2026 and 2027 and ensure there is a SaLT advanced practitioner in every Integrated Care Board (ICB) area.

Support for local areas to deliver the new system - £200m

To transform local SEND services and build a cohesive, child-focused, inclusive system. This funding will strengthen LAs' strategic planning, commissioning, leadership capacity and engagement with the education sector.

Best Start in Life Family Hubs – over £200m

For every Best Start Family Hub to enable each hub to have a SEND practitioner to offer direct support to children and families.

High Needs Capital - £3.7 billion

To create 60,000 new specialist places, including tens of thousands of places in inclusion bases and new special school places.



Repair and reform to this new system will be gradual with support in place before changes are made

Phase one: 2026 to 2028 Investment and building new system	Phase two: 2028 to 2029 Improved support	Phase three: 2029 onwards Future system
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce training programmes for all staff.• Schools, Colleges and early years settings first receive £530m per year from Inclusive Mainstream Fund.• Experts at Hand comes on stream for all settings.• Specialist Provision Packages published• National Inclusion Standards published	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mainstream legislation enacted• First assessments of children take place under reformed system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent special school price restrictions introduced.• EHCP, National Inclusion Standards and Individual Support Plan legislation enacted.• First children using Specialist Provision Packages.• 60,000 new places for children with SEND created.

“The white paper represents a pivotal moment for policy and system leadership.

“Policy sets direction, but change happens from the ground up. We have a collective responsibility to make this work. Another generation of children cannot be failed because reform proved too difficult.

“Inclusion can no longer sit in the “too hard” pile. We now have an opportunity to change it. It is the central reform – for schools, for this government and for social policy.

“This is about children; it’s about how we treat the most vulnerable and it’s about the sort of society we want to become. Now is the time to step forward together and seize this moment to create one system with high ambition for all children.”

**Tom Rees – Chief Executive, Ormiston Academies Trust and
Chair of Inclusion Expert Advisory Group**



Inclusion in Practice

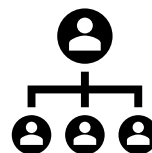




One system



Policy



Implementation



Engage schools
early



Department
for Education

Panel Discussion

Inclusion and SEND reform

10.20 - 10.50

March 2026

Panel speakers



Dr Julian Grenier
CBE

Senior Content
and Engagement
Manager for Early
Years



Clive Dunn

Senior His
Majesty's
Inspector
(Schools), South
East, Ofsted



Tim Mills

Regional
Improvement for
Standards and
Excellence (RISE)
Adviser



Andrew O'Neill

Schools Policy and
Delivery adviser,
DfE



Maria Dawes

Regional
Improvement for
Standards and
Excellence (RISE)
Adviser

**To submit
questions for the
panel discussion:**





Department
for Education

Refreshment break

10.50 - 11.10

March 2026



Department
for Education

Inclusion as a foundation for success

Insert RISE Adviser name here

11.10 – 12.00 *(including timings can be optional)*

March 2026



RISE Advisor Name

RISE Advisor Role

Maria was formally the CEO of Schools Alliance for Excellence, a school-led local education partnership in Surrey. This organisation is owned by 400 state schools in Surrey and provides professional learning, school improvement, consultancy, and system leadership.

Maria worked at the Department for Education (DfE) and held positions such as Deputy Director in the Regional Schools Commissioners office. She has extensive experience in school improvement, having worked as a Senior HMI for six years and held various leadership positions. Maria has 40 years' experience within education, beginning her career as a maths teacher.



Introduction

- How inclusion underpins good outcomes
- How schools will be supported
- 7 Principles of Inclusion
- Examples of Best Practice
- What can you do now – sharing our expertise
- Resources

How inclusion underpins good outcomes

- It promotes equity and belonging;
- It enhances academic and social outcomes for all pupils;
- It enables earlier identification and intervention;
- Preparation for adulthood;
- It allows children to attend their local school

How you will be supported as leaders

- Workforce training programmes
- Inclusive Mainstream Fund
- Experts at Hand
- National Inclusion Standards

7 Principles of Inclusion

2 key components: **the principle that underpins all aspects of school design** and **the process of removing barriers to high quality education**

Setting strong inclusive principles

- **Ambitious leadership and governance** that embeds inclusion and a continuous consideration of all types of needs at the core of planning
- **Safe and respectful culture** so that children and young people have trusting relationships and a strong sense of belonging
- **Strong partnerships with families and wider services in the community** to best support children and young people particularly through transitions

Removing barriers to participation and learning

- **High-quality teaching** where curriculum is designed to support the achievement of all and teaching staff adapt their teaching to address a diverse range of needs
- **Accessible and enriching provision beyond the classroom**, providing opportunities for pupils to build their independence and prepare for adulthood
- **Evidence-based targeted support** which prioritises early intervention with children and young people accessing the right support at the right time
- **Inclusive environments** with continued consideration to improving the accessibility and creating more supportive learning experiences

Best Practice

Ambitious leadership and governance

Inclusion is at the heart of school planning and strategy setting, using data and involving pupils and families in decision-making.

Staff and governors are knowledgeable and engaged on SEND, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

Safe and respectful culture

Consistent processes are in place to identify and support pupils who are struggling with their mental health.

Diversity and difference is celebrated within the curriculum and across the school.

Strong partnerships with families and local communities, including LAs

There is a strong relationship between the school and the local authority. Data and findings are routinely shared and policies are co-designed.

Parents and families have the opportunity to contribute to and engage in school decisions.

SLT have a strong awareness of the services available to them in their local area.



Best Practice

High-quality teaching

Ensure your staff have access to relevant SEND training

Ensure your curriculum is designed to help all pupils develop key life skills, and track individual development

Support staff with their own mental health, particularly when experiencing difficult situations

Accessible enrichment

Plan adaptations into enrichment activities to ensure SEND pupils can fully participate.

Provide opportunities to build life skills and independence.

Evidence-based targeted support

Develop early identification pathways to address needs early.

Interventions are based on the best and most relevant evidence.

Implement regular review cycles where interventions are monitored or impact.

Inclusive environments

Classrooms are designed to support learning and minimise distraction.

Flexible spaces are implemented for regulation and learning, in a way which works for pupils.

Inclusivity – what can you do now?

Intentionally inclusive – a whole school ethos:

- *Is there a shared vision for inclusion across your school or MAT?*
- *Is inclusion seen as everyone's responsibility?*
- *Is your vision understood by everyone in the school? How do you know?*
- *What structures do you have which enable staff collaboration, prioritise inclusive leadership, and align SEND support with whole-school improvement goals?*

Inclusivity – what can you do now?

Adaptive teaching:

- *Have you embedded adaptive teaching into your core professional development offer – how often is this revisited?*
- *How much support do your teachers get?*
- *What does the professional learning look like in practice?*
- *How evidence informed is it?*
- *How consistent is it across your school or your MAT?*

Inclusivity – what can you do now?

Create a safe and nurturing environment for all pupils so :

- *How do you promote positive relationships and active engagement for all pupils?*
- *Who is responsible for creating an inclusive environment for all pupils?*
- *In what ways might teachers adapt their interactions with pupils with SEND to best support them?*
- *What adaptations have you made in your school to include all children and young people?*

Inclusivity – what can you do now?

Working effectively with teaching assistants:

- *How can TAs and teachers work together to maximise their impact?*
- *Are there any risks with TAs working one-to-one with pupils?*
- *How can these be managed?*
- *What are the most effective ways of deploying TAs to secure the best outcomes for pupils?*

Inclusivity – what can you do now?

Work with other partners:

- *How do you use AP outreach to support your work?*
- *Are you already working as a local group to share resources*
- *How are you working with your Local Authority to access specialist support ?*



Becoming more inclusive



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Case Studies



Through a series of case studies, we will share deep-dive explorations of some of the promising inclusive mainstream practice that has been shared. The case studies don't serve to endorse the entirety of any school or trust's approach, but aim to spotlight aspects of strong practice and resources for system benefit.



Inclusion in Practice

Case Study:

The Compass Partnership of Schools

(Image of a boy reading in a library)

How The Compass Partnership of Schools use a SEND Parent-Carer Forum to shape inclusive practice and strengthen school-family collaboration.



Inclusion in Practice

Case Study:

Percy Shurmer Academy

(Image of students working at a desk)

How Percy Shurmer Academy uses a personalised, data-driven 'flight path' system to track pupils' progress, enabling early identification of need and targeted support



Further Resources

- [Inclusion in Practice](#) – an initiative involving the SEND inclusion in education expert group, the Ambition Institute, the Confederation of School Trusts and a range of sector partners
- [RISE support for inclusive mainstream education - GOV.UK](#) – programmes and resources to help mainstream schools improve inclusivity
- [Information on SEND Reform for those leading and working in mainstream schools](#) – a summary of the Schools White Paper for those in mainstream schools
- [Every child achieving and thriving \(HTML version\) - GOV.UK](#) – the full Schools White Paper
- [SEND reform: putting children and young people first \(HTML version\) - GOV.UK](#) – the SEND consultation document



Department
for Education

Lunch

12.00 – 12.45

March 2026



Department
for Education

Breakout rooms

12.45 – 15.10

March 2026



Breakout Rooms

Use of Assistive Tech

Andrew Bullock &
Jenny Fissenden

England Suite

In-school Units

Alex Russell, OBE

India Suite

Using data in schools to drive inclusion

Anna McCleary

Ashes Suite

Supporting effective transitions

Neil Miller,
Deputy CEO

John Major Suite

Refreshment break: 14.10 – 14.25

Return to main room 15:10



Department
for Education

Closing speech

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP - Secretary of State for Education

Andrew O'Neill - Schools Policy and Delivery adviser, DfE

March 2026

Thank you for attending

Please tell us what you thought of today

